THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

BRENDA MARY ALICE JONES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

SCULPTURE

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1996

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

submitted by BRENDA MARY ALICE JONES in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

The University of Alberta

RELEASE FORM

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YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED 1996

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections, University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Elders Sage	1995	Wood	3' x 3' x 11'

Insurance Value: $10,000.00

Brenda Mary Alice Jones



Opening reception:
Thursday, October 10
7pm - 10pm

This exhibition is the final visual presentation in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture

October 8 to 20,1996

Guardians

Urban Totems

Gallery Hours:
Tuesday to Friday 10 - 5
Sunday 2 - 5
Closed Saturday, Monday and Statutory Holidays

Guardians
Urban Totems

I walk in two worlds, I belong to two societies and I have been educated in both traditional native and Western European cultural traditions. ***Urban Totems*** are very much a part of who I am. I create sculptures as a way of responding to the remnants of my daily routine, environments and traditions. I live in an urban setting but yet my heart beats to the sound of an Ojibway drum. My work is resonant of my living in two worlds, and a representative of a mixture of the two dichotomies.

My sculptures are abstract totems, (totems that are markings of who I am.) but not the totems that are so often associated with the West Coast Natives. My work is about place and memory in the past. I became mesmerized the first time I saw Stone Henge in an art history book. The nature and placement of the work was not simplistic in nature. They are a highly structured marking left in memory of another time. I was also influenced by the figures on Easter Island, the Guardians. Both Stone Henge and The Easter Islands remain as mysterious markings of an ancient society. It is my hope that my sculptures will exist as a tribute to my ancestral past and to my urban contemporaries.

I also try to create sculptures that address the aesthetic of Modernist Abstract Sculpture. I enjoy how modern sculpture manipulates and draws the space around the sculpture. These Monoliths create an exciting challenge that involves forcing the structure to carve out and address the space that it exists in. This spatial relationship is the direct result of drawing with the wood. I am not only making structures that fit into the space, but also manipulates, defines and diminishes the space around it. It is my intention that the work will impact the space in such a manner that once the work is gone, the memory will live on.

As I create my sculptures, there is the presence of the ancestors in my work. The wood I work with is scavenged from lumber mills and construction sites. I have not cut a living tree in its growth to create my work. Using previously milled wood allows me the ability to return the wood back to an organic shape. It was a way of returning the spirit of the ancestors back to the forms they once occupied. It is my way of paying homage to my Ancestors Guardians and my Grandfathers that have gone on to the spirit world.

- Naghigquai (Otter Woman)
Brenda Mary Alice Jones

Artist's Statement

The Great Pyramids, Easter Island, Stone Henge, The West Coast Totems and The Inukshuk are all great mysteries that I have been fascinated with. I riddle myself with questions, who did this, when and how? Great mysteries have always held my imagination. When I saw a photograph of Stone Henge I was drawn right through the Kodachrome and became a part of the mystery. When I saw an Inukshuk, I was no longer human matter, I became part of the mystery. I reach inside myself to find the great mystery of my life. I believe that this influence comes out in my work. My sculptures are a great mystery to myself. Where the work comes from, how and why the work happened are questions that sometimes I cannot answer. What I can say about my sculptures is that they are a reference to urban architecture and rural settings. This is a derivative from my life history as being an Aboriginal person with Welsh ancestry and from spending time in both the city and the reserve. This has helped me acculturate and find a balance between both diverse cultures, lifestyles and ways of understanding. I try to represent a balance of two dichotomies into one solid unit of representations. Working in a modernist tradition enables me to free myself from any form of narration or content. The work becomes one solid sculpture that perhaps represents the great mystery that makes up my spirit, my world and my life.